

Message Text

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CONFIDENTIAL PONTA DELGADA 0297

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT,PO

SUBJECT: AZOREAN NOTES: SUMMER CALM

1. PROGRESS ON TRANSFER OF PERIPHERAL SERVICES: FOR SEVERAL MONTHS THE MOST SERIOUS ON-GOING PROBLEM BETWEEN THE REGIONAL AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENTS HAS BEEN THE TRANSFER OF PERIPHERAL GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES FROM CENTRAL TO REGIONAL CONTROL. THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT BELIEVES IT MUST HAVE CONTROL OF THESE SERVICES IN ORDER TO GOVERN EFFECTIVELY. FOR EXAMPLE, THE FORESTRY SERVICE IS PERIPHERAL AND REGIONAL OFFICIALS BELIEVE THEY MUST CONTROL IT IN ORDER TO COORDINATE OVERALL AGRICULTURAL POLICY. THE PROVISIONAL STATUTES OF AUTONOMY STATE THAT A COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE REGIONAL AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENTS SHOULD WORK OUT THE TRANSFER OF THESE SERVICES. THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT HAS COMPLAINED THAT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN DRAGGING ITS FEET, AND IT REJECTED A RECENT SOCIALIST PROPOSAL THAT THE TERMS OF TRANSFER SHOULD BE OUTLINED IN THE DEFINITIVE STATUTES OF AUTONOMY FOR WHICH THERE ARE NO IMMEDIATE PLANS FOR DRAFTING. IN JULY DEFENSE MINISTER

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FERMINO MIGUEL WAS APPOINTED CHAIRMAN OF A NEW COMMITTEE TO WORK OUT THE DETAILS OF TRANSFER. PSD SOURCES SAID PRESIDENT EANES GAVE MIGUEL, AN INDEPENDENT, THIS JOB IN ORDER TO REMOVE THE ISSUE FROM PARTISAN POLITICS. AFTER MEETINGS IN LISBON WITH MIGUEL AND OTHERS REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, MELO ALVES, SAID THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE ON THE TRANSFER QUESTION.

2. CHANGES IN THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT? IN THE LAST TWO MONTHS THERE HAS BEEN INCREASING CRITICISM OF LACK OF EFFICIENCY IN THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT. THE REGIONAL SECRETARIES FOR COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, MEDEIROS FERREIRA AND FOR AGRICULTURE AND FISHING, GERMANO DOMINGUES HAVE BORNE THE BRUNT OF THE CRITICISM. NEITHER WAS CONSIDERED A STRONG CHOICE WHEN APPOINTED, AND THERE IS SPECULATION THAT ONE OR BOTH WILL BE REPLACED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. MEDEIROS FERREIRA IS THE MOST VULNERABLE BUT A LACK OF SUITABLE CANDIDATES TO REPLACE HIM MAY BE ONE OF THE REASONS HE IS STILL IN OFFICE.

3. SUMMER CALM: THERE HAVE BEEN NO INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE IN THE AZORES SINCE THE GUN SHOTS FIRED ON JUNE 26 AFTER FLA LEADER JOSE DE ALMEIDA WAS SUSPENDED FROM HIS TEACHING JOB. ALMEIDA'S FOLLOWERS GAVE HIM AN ENTHUSIASTIC WELCOME UPON HIS RETURN FROM A RECENT TRIP TO BRASIL. THE ONLY OTHER SEPARATIST ACTIVITY HAS BEEN THE DISTRIBUTION OF AN OCCASSIONAL POORLY WRITTEN PAMPHLET.

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